

Amendment to the Claims:

The claims under examination in this application, including their current status and changes made in this paper, are respectfully presented.

1 – 4 (canceled).

5 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the reacting step results in a coating in the form of a monolayer.

6 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the oxidized surface is selected from the group consisting of: metals, semimetals, transition metals, ceramics, alloys thereof, and any combination thereof.

7 (canceled).

8 (currently amended). The method of claim 27, wherein the second constituent is selected from the group consisting of: esters, amides, organic acids, phenolates, thiolates, phosphonates, alkoxides, and any combinations thereof.

9 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the nucleophilic molecule is selected from the group consisting of: alcohols, amines, carboxylic acid, phenols, thiols, phosphonic acids, and any combinations thereof.

10 (canceled).

11 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the first constituent comprises Si.

12 (previously presented). The method of claim 11, wherein the active species comprises $\text{Si}(\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_3)_4$ and the nucleophilic molecule comprises an alcohol.

13 – 21 (canceled).

22 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the reacting step is performed at a temperature above an environmental temperature to which the coating is expected to be exposed.

23 – 26 (canceled).

27 (currently amended). A method of passivating an oxidized surface, comprising the steps of:

applying an active species comprising a compound of a first constituent and a second constituent to the oxidized surface, the first constituent being a metal, semimetal, transition metal, or a ceramic, and the second constituent being a reactive group, so that the first constituent covalently bonds with the oxidized surface and the reactive group is exposed; and

then reacting a nucleophilic molecule ~~with the exposed reactive group~~ to displace the exposed reactive group, and to covalently bond the nucleophilic molecule with the first constituent.

28 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the applying step is performed by vapor phase deposition.

29 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the compound of the active species further comprises an inert substituent.

30 (previously presented). The method of claim 27, wherein the applying step is performed by a high vacuum system.

31 (currently amended). The method of claim 27, wherein the reacting step comprises flooding the surface with the nucleophilic molecule in ~~large~~ excess.

32 (currently amended). The method of claim 12, wherein the alcohol is a ~~long-chain organic~~ long-chain-alcohol.

33 (previously presented). The method of claim 12, wherein the applying step is performed at a temperature from 180° C to 220° C.

34 (currently amended). The method of claim 33, wherein the applying step is performed by delivering the compound in ~~the~~ vapor phase under reduced pressure.

35 (previously presented). The method of claim 12, wherein the second constituent comprises ethoxy groups.